

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT. April 1970 – March 1971. (Pp. vi+128. £0.85p). London: Her Majesty Stationery Office, 1971.

The report has reverted to the plan of reporting work under the administrative sections of the Council's research programme and brief review articles are thus set beside shorter but related reports. The whole is intended to be comprehensible to the layman with a background of biology and medicine. Many interesting developments in widely different fields are glimpsed. Interest is stimulated but rarely satisfied. Administrative information given includes a list of council establishments, senior external scientific staff, block grant institutions and research groups and their directors. The number of research projects supported by grants is given under the hospital or institute concerned with 106 going to the University of Oxford. Members of committees and working parties are listed.

DICTIONARY OF ABBREVIATIONS IN MEDICINE AND THE RELATED SCIENCES by Edwin B. Steen, Ph.D. (Pp. 102. £1.25). London: Baillière, Tindall and Cassell, 1971.

Whether we like it or not the use of abbreviations in medical literature has become so general that a handy source of reference is now a necessity. This is the third edition of a book first published in the United States in 1960. The present trend of writing abbreviations without stops is accepted and abbreviations are given in capital letters unless common usage dictates the use of small letters. Double columns of over fifty lines each and 94 pages of text give most abbreviations.

A few abbreviations may have twenty or more meanings in different contexts, and it is difficult to find omissions. Surgeons will note pr on a different page from PR, which has eight alternative meanings, while gynaecologists will find only PV with the meaning paraventricular (nucleus) and plasma volume. Useful symbols, the abbreviations for the principal medical journals and a list of useful reference books complete a valuable and unique reference source.